



CIVIC LEARNING AWARD

For California Public Elementary and Middle Schools

Application and Overview

2014–2015

Civic Learning Award Overview

PURPOSE

"The success of our nation and state depends on educated, informed, and active citizens and residents. ... For all students in California to have access to a continuum of civic learning experiences starting in Kindergarten—and to effectively respond to equity issues—we must embed robust civic learning throughout the K–12 experience, both within and beyond school walls" (California Task Force on K–12 Civic Learning, August 2014, www.cde.ca.gov/pd/ca/hs/civgovlegalstudyres.asp).

OBJECTIVE

To celebrate schools' efforts to engage students in civic learning and to identify effective and replicable civic learning models.

AWARDS FOR PUBLIC ELEMENTARY AND MIDDLE SCHOOLS

- **Civic Learning Award of Excellence.** Top-scoring schools receive a visit from the Chief Justice of California and a plaque.
- **Civic Learning Award of Distinction.** High-scoring schools receive a visit from an appellate court justice and a plaque.
- **Civic Learning Award of Merit.** Mid-scoring schools receive recognition from a local court judicial officer and a plaque.

SELECTION PROCESS AND RESEARCH-BASED PRACTICES IN CIVIC LEARNING

The application process asks schools to describe their civic learning practices and programs, with an emphasis on those that incorporate research-based areas of effective civic education, as described in the *Guardian of Democracy: The Civic Mission of Schools* report from The Leonore Annenberg Institute for Civics of the Annenberg Public Policy Center at the University of Pennsylvania and the Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools. A panel of experts from California will assess the applications according to both depth and breadth of civic learning.

| 2014–2015 CIVIC LEARNING AWARDS TIMELINE | |
|--|-------------------------|
| Letter of invitation to schools | October 2014 |
| Application deadline | December 15, 2014 |
| Announcement of winners | Mid-February 2015 |
| School visits completed | By close of school year |

APPLICATIONS ARE AVAILABLE AT

www.cde.ca.gov/eo/in/civiclearningaward.asp
www.courts.ca.gov/23201.htm

Instructions and Selection Process

Thank you for your interest in applying for a civic learning award! Please complete steps 1 through 5 below.

Applications are due: December 15, 2014

1. **Review the Six Research-Based Proven Practices in Civic Education, at pages 4–5, and the related links.** The selection process for these awards will be based on an emphasis on these practices.
2. **Briefly describe up to three classes, clubs, and/or other educational programs at your school that incorporate at least one of the six civic learning proven practices (pages 7–8), including a 400-word narrative description in an attachment.** As the proven practices touch on various aspects of school life, from curricular to extracurricular, schools are invited to submit descriptions of more than one class/club/program. For each, the application requires a short written overview and completion of several fill-in-the-blank questions. Please copy pages 7 and 8 for each class/club/program to be included in application (up to three).
3. **Applicants are invited to attach up to two pages of supplemental material for each class/club/program. Please label the page with the school name and school district, as well as class/club/program title.** Examples of students' work are especially encouraged and may include excerpts from student writing and/or photos of student projects with explanatory captions. A link to a website or short video (up to 3 minutes maximum) will each be considered "one page." Please be sure that the proper permissions are on record for any images of students being shared. (Up to six pages of supplemental materials; two maximum for each class/club/program.)
4. **Complete the cover sheet with signatures (page 6.)**
5. **Mail, e-mail, or fax the application, plus the cover sheet and attachments, so that they arrive on December 15th, by 5:00 p.m., to:**

Deborah Genzer
Judicial Council of California
455 Golden Gate Avenue
San Francisco, California 94102
E-mail: deborah.genzer@jud.ca.gov
6. **Selection Process:** A panel of experts will assess the schools according to the depth and breadth of their civic learning programs, as described in their application. Follow-up questions may be asked and a validation visit may be required.
7. **Winners will be announced in mid-February 2015.**

Six Research-Based Proven Practices in Civic Education

These proven practices are provided by the *Guardian of Democracy: The Civic Mission of Schools* report, from the Leonore Annenberg Institute for Civics of the Annenberg Public Policy Center at the University of Pennsylvania, the Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools, the Center for Information & Research on Civic Learning and Engagement at Tufts University, the American Bar Association's Division for Public Education, and the National Conference on Citizenship. Full copies of the report may be downloaded at: www.ncoc.net/guardianofdemocracy

PROVEN PRACTICE #1: Provide instruction in government, history, law, and democracy. Formal instruction in U.S. government, history, and democracy increases civic knowledge. This is a valuable goal in itself and may also contribute to young people's tendency to engage in civic and political activities over the long term. However, schools should avoid teaching only rote facts about dry procedures, which is unlikely to benefit students and may actually alienate them from politics.

PROVEN PRACTICE #2: Discuss current local, national, or international issues and events in the classroom, particularly those that young people view as important to their lives. When young people have opportunities to discuss current issues in a classroom setting, they tend to have greater interest in politics, improved critical thinking and communications skills, more civic knowledge, and more interest in discussing public affairs out of school. Conversations, however, should be carefully moderated so that students feel welcome to speak from a variety of perspectives. Teachers need support in broaching controversial issues in classrooms since they may risk criticism or sanctions if they do so.

PROVEN PRACTICE #3: Design and implement programs that provide students with the opportunity to apply what they learn through performing school or community service that is linked to the formal curriculum and classroom instruction. Service programs are now common in K–12 schools. The ones that best develop engaged citizens are linked to the curriculum and they:

- Consciously pursue civic outcomes, rather than seek only to improve academic performance or to promote higher self-esteem
- Allow students to engage in meaningful work on serious school or public issues, giving students a role in choosing and designing their projects
- Provide students with opportunities to reflect on the service work
- Allow students—especially older ones—to pursue political or school policy responses to problems consistent with laws that require public schools to be nonpartisan
- See service learning as part of a broader philosophy toward education, not just a program that is adopted for a finite period in a particular class

PROVEN PRACTICE #4: Offer extracurricular activities that provide opportunities for young people to get involved in their schools or communities. Long-term studies of Americans show that those who participate in extracurricular activities remain more civically engaged than their contemporaries even decades later. Thus, everyone should have opportunities to join school groups, and such participation should be valued.

PROVEN PRACTICE #5: Encourage student participation in classroom and/or school governance.

A long tradition of research suggests that giving students more opportunities to participate in the management of their own classrooms and schools builds their civic skills and attitudes.

PROVEN PRACTICE #6: Encourage students' participation in role-plays and/or simulations of democratic processes and procedures. Recent evidence indicates that simulations and role-plays of voting, trials, legislative deliberation, and diplomacy in schools can lead to heightened political knowledge and interest.

RELATED LINKS

Civic Learning Award winners, 2012–2014: www.courts.ca.gov/23201.htm

Civic Learning Award Rubric, 2014–2015: www.courts.ca.gov/23201.htm

Note: Applicants are asked to describe articulation with California Common Core State Standards.

California Common Core State Standards: www.cde.ca.gov/re/cc/

California ELA/ELD Framework: www.cde.ca.gov/ci/rl/cf/elaeldfrmwrksbeadopted.asp

Preparing Students for College, Career, and Citizenship: A California Guide to Align Civic Education and the Common Core Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects:

http://commoncore.lacoe.edu/documents/preparing_students_civic_education_connections.pdf

College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies: www.socialstudies.org/c3

Civic Learning Award Application Cover Sheet

Please include this cover sheet with your application.

School Name: _____

School Address: _____

Street

_____, CA _____

City

ZIP code

School District: _____

School District Address: _____

Superintendent Signature: _____

Principal Name: _____

Principal Signature: _____

Contact Name: _____

Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

Fax: _____

Best way to contact: Phone _____ E-mail _____ Fax _____

Number of class/club/program descriptions enclosed: _____

About your school:

Grades levels at your school (*check all that apply*):

Kindergarten _____ 1st Grade _____ 2nd Grade _____ 3rd Grade _____ 4th Grade _____

5th Grade _____ 6th Grade _____ 7th Grade _____ 8th Grade _____

Number of students enrolled at your school: _____

Name of School: _____

Name of School District: _____

Civic Learning Opportunity Description

You may submit a description of up to three different civic learning classes/clubs/programs. Please copy this form for each submitted class/club/program.

- This is civic learning class/club/program—description no. 1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____
- Name of class/club/program _____
- Grade level involved (*please check all that apply*): K _____ 1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____ 4 _____
5 _____ 6 _____ 7 _____ 8 _____
- Include a **narrative description** (limit of 400 words, in 12-point font) as an attachment. Your narrative is **required** and should respond to the following prompts: *What is the purpose of this civic learning class/club/program? What learning activities (especially those that incorporate any of the "proven practices" in civic learning) are students engaged in? What are successful impacts and/or outcomes for students? If you are writing about academic learning, please include articulation with the California Common Core State Standards.*
- Please check all of following research-based practices that are incorporated into this class/club/program:

1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____ 4 _____ 5 _____ 6 _____ 7 Other (*please describe*): _____

• The percentage of students who will have participated in this class/club/program by the time they are promoted from your school is _____.
- Duration of opportunity (e.g., one 50-minute class period; one class period a week for one month, etc.):

- Check the number of years that this opportunity has been offered:
1–2 _____ 3–4 _____ 5+ _____

- What, if any, method is used to assess or evaluate students' civic learning (*check all that apply*):

N/A: _____ written: _____ oral: _____ performance based: _____ other: _____

If other, please describe: _____

- Briefly describe any school or district policies that support this civic learning: _____

- ____ Please check here if you have attached up to two pages of supplemental materials (*please see instructions on page 3 for more detail*).